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Washington Gladden



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For my loving and
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Joe R. Mosley.

Christmas '98.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM.



THE
CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

BY
WASHINGTON GLADDEN

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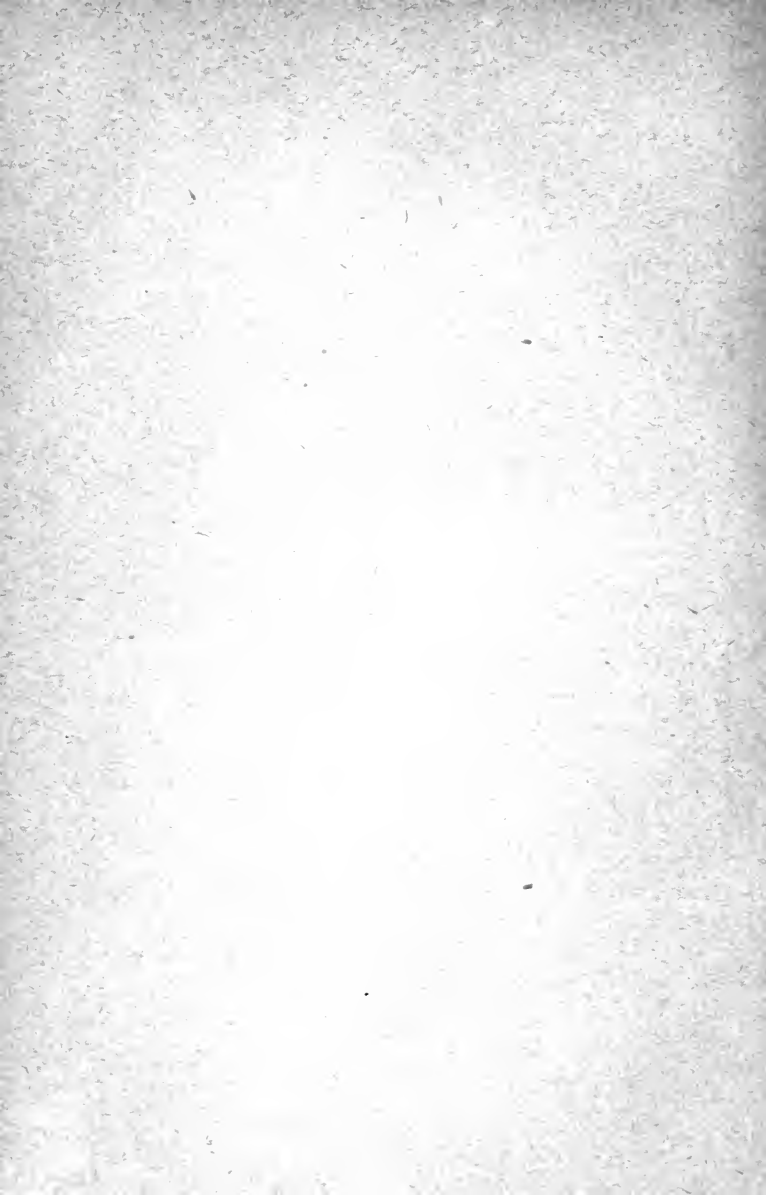
PREFATORY NOTE.

THE first of these addresses was delivered before the State Association of the Congregational Churches of Ohio, May 9, 1894. The second was given before the graduating class of the Oberlin Theological Seminary, May 3, 1894. They are published because of a wish on the part of those who heard them, which has been so strongly expressed that I am constrained to interpret it as a command.

The addresses deal with questions just now exciting much discussion. My effort has been not to controvert so much as to supplement and complete statements made by men with whose purposes I am in the deepest sympathy, and for whose characters I have the highest regard.

WASHINGTON GLADDEN.

Columbus, Ohio, May 16, 1894.



THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM.



WHAT is the relation of the church to the kingdom of God? The terms are often used interchangeably ; and it is sometimes assumed that the church is simply the kingdom in its organized form. I do not think that this is the true conception. The kingdom of God is the larger term ; the kingdom includes the church, but the church does not include the kingdom.

Our Lord's use of the words is significant. "Kingdom" is used by him more than one hundred times, and "church" but twice. "The names," says Dr. Fairbairn, "are either synonymous, or they are not. If they are synonymous, it must be possible to translate the church into the terms of the kingdom and the kingdom into the terms of the church. If they are not, then the kingdom, as Christ's most used, most emphasized, and most descriptive name for his society, must contain his determinative idea ; *i. e.*, the church must

be construed through the kingdom, and not the kingdom through the church."¹

Jesus nowhere defines the kingdom; his treatment of it is always concrete and pictorial; he shows it to us in instances and illustrations; but it is not difficult for us to reach through his sayings some clear notion of what it is. Sometimes he gives us just a trait or feature of it; sometimes he shows us how an individual life is related to it; sometimes he unfolds for us the law of its development in the field of the world and through the course of history. In the largest sense of the word we may say that the kingdom of God is the whole social organism so far as it is affected by divine influences.

Human society is an organism; it is a whole whose parts are intrinsically and vitally related to it; humanity is one body with many members. Every organism is the product of one co-ordinating life-force; and the vital principle of this social organism is the life which is in Christ, and which is the light of men. For in him were all things created, and in him all things hold together; in him, Paul says, the whole creation comes to a head. Wherever society exists, wherever men

¹ "The Place of Christ in Theology," p. 515.

dwell together peacefully and helpfully, there the life that was incarnate in Jesus Christ finds some faint manifestation. In him the world was created, by him it has been redeemed. I do not say that it will be, I say that it has been.

This world is Christ's world. Ever since his feet pressed its stony paths, ever since his voice stirred its conscious air, and his blessed hands broke its loaves and caressed its lilies, and with his precious blood its soil became incarnadine, the world has belonged to him.

"The world we live in wholly is redeemed ;
Not man alone, but all that man holds dear ;
His orchards and his maize,—forget-me-nots
And heart's-ease in his garden,—and the wild
Aerial blossoms of the untamed wood
That make its savagery so homelike — all
Have felt Christ's sweet love watering their roots.
There are no Gentile oaks, no Pagan pines ;
The grass beneath our feet is Christian grass :
The wayside weed is sacred unto Him."

The world is not saved ; but you must say precisely the same thing about it that was said of the men who came into the church at Pentecost — it is "being saved." The work of reclaiming and renewing it is always going on. The race is redeemed, and it is "being saved." Through centuries of strife and confusion;

through darkness and dearth, through suffering and sorrow, humanity moves slowly forward in the track of God's great purpose.

The kingdom of heaven is here, just as the spring is here when the crocuses open and the violets and the spring beauties are first in evidence. There is more to follow, but spring is here. We pray that it may come — more and more of it — but always with thanks and praise for what has come already. When it shall have fully come, what will it be? what shall we see?

Every department of human life,— the families, the schools, amusements, art, business, politics, industry, national policies, international relations,— will be governed by the Christian law and controlled by Christian influences. When we are bidden to seek first the kingdom of God, we are bidden to set our hearts on this great consummation; to keep this always before us as the object of our endeavors; to be satisfied with nothing less than this. The complete Christianization of all life is what we pray for and work for, when we work and pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Now I do not think that the word "church" can very well be stretched to cover all this.

I do not believe that politics and business and art and literature are properly departments of church life. The church is the organization in which religion is made our *special* care; in which we confine our attention to spiritual truths and laws, seeking to comprehend them that we may apply them; in which we study the revelations that God has made to us of his nature and purposes, that we may bring ourselves into communion and fellowship with him through prayer and song and worship, that we may gain inspiration and courage for the work and warfare of life.

It is necessary that religion should be specialized in institutions which are devoted to its interests. The problem is to make all life religious; but in order that it may become so, associations are needed whose function it shall be to cultivate religious ideas and religious feelings.

Electricity, we are told, pervades the whole earth and the whole atmosphere. It is everywhere about us; perhaps the time may come when we can make this *diffused* electricity do our chores and run our errands; but, for the present, we must have the power-house with the dynamos, where it is collected and concentrated, and distributed to the places where

it is wanted. And, in like manner, although the spirit of Christianity ought to pervade and to some extent does pervade the whole of the society in which we live; though the kingdom of heaven, like the hidden leaven, is here, living and working upon the earth; yet there is need that this influence be gathered up and concentrated in institutions formed for this special purpose, that its nature may be more distinctly seen and its power more wisely directed.

As we study the laws of life, we find the higher orders of being distinguished by what the physiologists call an increasing specialization of function.

“In the progress from the lower to the higher organism,” says Mr. Huxley, “there is a gradual differentiation of organs and of functions. Each function is separated into many parts, which are severally intrusted to distinct organs. To use the striking phrase of Milne Edwards, ‘in passing from low to high organisms, there is a division of physiological labor.’”

Thus in the lower orders of sentient creatures the nervous system is diffused through the living mass, or distributed over its surface; but as the creatures rise in the scale, the

nerves are gathered into knots, or ganglions, and their function is gradually separated until in the vertebrates, and especially in man, you find the brain, a great central organ, safely housed in a strong cavity made for its protection, whence it moves and directs the whole body. This separation and specialization of the nervous function does not make the human body less sensitive or less responsive to nervous action than the bodies of the snails and the worms; the contrary is the fact. By concentration the nervous force is increased and intensified.

In the same manner, as society advances, the different social functions are specialized; I think that this is likely to be more and more the case. And although religion ought to pervade and govern the whole of society, just as the nervous system pervades and governs the whole human body, yet religion, for this very reason, needs to be specialized in institutions of its own, as the brain is specialized and localized in the human body. It is thus that it gains power to move and direct human society.

This illustration may suggest to us the relation between the church and the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is the en-

tire social organism in its ideal perfection ; the church is one of the organs,—the most central and important of them all,—having much the same relation to Christian society that the brain has to the body. The body is not all brain ; but the brain is the seat of thought and feeling and motion. A body without a brain could not be a very effective instrument of the mind ; society, without those specialized religious functions which are gathered up in the church, would not very readily receive and incarnate and distribute the gifts of the spirit of God.

And yet the brain is of use only as it furnishes to all the other organs and parts of the body, feeling and motion. It must make the eye sensitive to light, the tongue to flavors, the ear to sound, the hands and feet to the volitions of the will which set them in motion. The brain is in one sense the master, in another sense the servant of the whole body. It helps to co-ordinate all the physical powers, and it supplies them all with the conditions by means of which their work is done. Suppose that the brain undertook to set up house-keeping on its own hook ; to look out for itself, and have little relation to the other parts of the body ; to assume that the brain was the

man, and that so long as the brain was well-developed, it mattered little about the other parts of the human economy. Is it not evident that any separation of the brain from the rest of the body would kill the brain as well as the rest of the body? The life and health of the brain are only found in ministering to the whole body.

Exactly in the same way is the church related to all the other parts of human society. Its life is in their life; it cannot live apart from them; it lives by what it gives to them; it has neither meaning nor justification except in what it does to vitalize and spiritualize business and politics and amusement and art and literature and education, and every other interest of society. The moment it draws apart, and tries to set up a snug little ecclesiasticism, with interests of its own, and a cultus of its own, and standards and sentiments of its own, and enjoyments of its own — the moment it begins to teach men to be religious just for the sake of being religious — that moment it becomes dead and accursed; it is worse than useless; it is a bane and a blight to all the society in which it stands.

These illustrations may enable us to see what are the true relations of the church to

the kingdom of God. And they will point out two errors, of an exactly opposite nature, both of which are too prevalent.

The first error is that of those to whom Christianity is churchianity ; those who separate the church from the rest of the world, and give their whole time and strength to exalting it, and building it up, caring little or nothing for the other departments of life ; not wishing or at any rate not trying to establish any vital relations between it and those interests which men call secular. To these persons the church is not a means to an end, but it is an end in itself. The church is not the channel through which the life of God flows into the world ; it is the reservoir into which the tribute of the world is to flow for the honor of God. Humanity exists for the church, not the church for humanity. The great object is to make men into good churchmen, not to train churchmen to be good men.

The other error is that of those who think that because it is the office of religion to mingle with and sanctify every department of human life, therefore there is no need that we should have any separate institutions of religion. This is precisely as if one should say :
“ Because we want the nervous influence dif-

fused through every part of the human body, making it quick and sensitive and responsive, therefore we do not want any brain." I do not think that this is good philosophy. I believe that there is exactly the same need of separate organs for the development and manifestation of the spiritual life in the social organism, that there is for the concentration and diffusion of nervous influence in the physical organism. And I do not think that those are wise who disparage the function of the church, or imagine that we are likely to outgrow it as we go on toward social perfection. We are just as likely to do without it as we are likely, in our ascent toward intellectual perfection, to dispense with brains and return to the condition of the oyster, with the nervous system diffused through the whole molluscous mass.

Let me mention, a little more particularly, some of the functions which the church, as the central organ of the great social organism, is called to fulfill.

The whole Christian body, Paul says, "is fitly framed and knit together, through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part,"—all the different members perform-

ing their several offices,—“till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” That is to say, the ideal of Christian perfection cannot be represented by any single individual. It takes a good many men, dwelling together,—worshipping and working together,—to exhibit the perfect divine manhood; to show what Christianity is.

Take even the element of worship. It is impossible that this should be realized in all its fullness except in the great congregation. One of the elements of worship is song; but no single voice can express what is expressed by the swelling chorus. There is an inspiration and an uplift in the grand choral song that no man can know anything about who worships by himself in the closet or in the secret place of the forest. There are elements of worship which one finds in the secret place and not in the congregation; but the converse is also true. No man alone can sing “The Heavens are Telling” or the “Hallelujah Chorus;” no man alone can sing “Old Hundred” or the “*Gloria Patri*” and find in it the awakening of his higher and nobler

feelings which he experiences when he joins with a thousand others in lifting up the mighty harmony.

And the same thing is true of prayer. I do not mean to say that there is no inspiring prayer in which all the voices do not join ; I do not even mean that there is no genuine prayer but that which is offered in a public place. Quite the contrary is true. There are some kinds of prayer for which there is no place but the secret place. But on the other hand, we must not interpret those words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount as forbidding public prayer. That is a gross misunderstanding of them. Our Lord himself prayed in public more than once. What he forbids is ostentation in praying—praying in public *for the sake of being seen of men*. But there is a kind of prayer, and it is the highest kind, which is never heard and can never be heard in any other than a public place. When the man who prays is able to forget all about the impression which his prayer is making, and simply to gather into his own heart, by sympathy, the needs and the troubles and the burdens and the longings of the multitude who, in hushed silence are bowing with him before the mercy seat ;

when he is able to identify himself with them, to discern, by spiritual insight, the struggles, the sorrows, the hopes, the fears of these human hearts ; and when, under the stress of this burden of sympathetic desire, he lifts up to God the voice of prayer, there is something in that voice deeper, diviner, fuller of inspiration, than any man ever knows who worships alone in his closet. I have heard men pray in public as no man ever prayed or could pray in secret. The presence of the worshipping assembly, the overpowering sense of their needs, the wish to bring them, with himself, into the very presence of God, the yearning to make known to them the Father, the subtle response that comes to him in the tides of feeling that flood his own soul and lift up his thoughts,—all this is an experience which can come to no man in the closet,—which requires the association of men in worship.

I know very well that there is a great deal of what passes for prayer in public places, which is only the saying of prayers, just as there is a great deal of preaching which is no divinely given message, but the mere recitation of what the preacher has been taught to say ; but the true prayer which leads the congrega-

tion into the very presence of God, is the most sublime and uplifting utterance of which the human soul is capable. It is an act in which love for God and love for man are blended in one pure passion that fulfills the very law of the soul.

Now here is an element of the Christian life for the development of which the worshipping assembly is the necessary condition. The quickening, uplifting, inspiring influences which come into men's lives through the song and the prayer of the great congregation, would never be experienced if men were not gathered together in assemblies for worship. Christian worship, in its highest and noblest forms, requires the association of men for that special purpose.

I think that the same thing is equally true of teaching. The loftiest and most inspiring truth is received into the mind more readily, and makes a deeper impression upon the heart, when it comes from a glowing heart through burning lips, and is enforced not only by the emotion of the speaker, but by the sympathetic interest of a great congregation. The earnest preacher, the responsive assembly form an atmosphere in which all highest truth is more powerfully impressed. It ought

to be so. All this highest truth concerns our relations to one another and our common relation to God. When we are all together before God, we naturally feel that truth more deeply than at other times. Our sense of human brotherhood is signified and emphasized by meeting together in such an assembly, and the truths which bear upon this relation necessarily impress us more than they would do in solitary places.

But not only is it true of Christian worship and study that they require the union of men in harmonious groups ; it is even more true of the practical side of Christianity. To be a Christian is not only to think the thoughts and cherish the emotions that are Christian, but also and more emphatically to behave like a Christian. The love which is the fulfilling of the law is not merely an idea or a sentiment, it is a kind of conduct. To be a Christian is to govern myself in all my practical relations with my fellow-men by the Christian law of love.

Now, doubtless I am bound to observe this law in all my relations with my fellow-men, whether they are in the church or not; but those who do not recognize this law may not respond with Christian conduct ; the proper

reciprocal action of the Christian law may fail to be manifested. And it is evident that in an association composed of those who recognize the Christian law as the law of their life, there would be a better opportunity of illustrating the practical working of that law than in the promiscuous relations of men. A company of men and women, united on the basis of the Christian law, taking that as the rule of their conduct, and living up to it, could give the world such an object lesson of what Christianity is as the world could get in no other way. Imagine what would happen if every Christian church perfectly exemplified the Christian law in all its corporate life. What an impression would be made upon the community! How unnecessary it would be, in the presence of such churches, to discuss the evidences of Christianity!

It must be admitted that our churches, even the best of them, come very far short of realizing this standard in their daily life; nevertheless, I maintain that this is what they are for, and that they do, in some imperfect way, recognize and obey the Christian law. As a rule, in the churches, the law of competition, the law of strife, is in abeyance, and the law of mutual helpfulness is substi-

tuted for it. "Every man for himself" is not the maxim that we recognized as binding; we have other and very different rules of conduct from those which prevail in the outside world:—

"In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another."

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

"Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good unto edifying."

"Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting others better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others."

These are the rules of conduct which we recognize as binding in all our relations with one another in the Christian brotherhood. To say that we live up to them would be a manifest exaggeration; none the less we know that they are the rules by which we ought to live. We do not realize our ideal; but we have it always before us, and it is a very different ideal from that which governs

the political world and the commercial world. It is very true that the commercial and political maxims do sometimes intrude into our church life and take control of our church business ; it is sometimes true that church revenues are raised by appealing to the competitive principle, and offering privilege and distinction to those who have the most money. It is sometimes true, in the great ecclesiasticisms, that office and station are intrigued for and won by wire-pulling and log-rolling; but these are of the spirit of antichrist; they are the denial of the very foundation on which the church rests; they are more hostile to the life of the church than any sort of infidelity. When the church life is brought under the sway of such principles as these, the church becomes the most dangerous enemy of the kingdom of God in the world.

It is to be lamented that there are too many churches which have fallen into this practical apostasy. But there are churches, I am sure, which are trying to govern their corporate life by Christian principles ; which do not admit the competitive principle into the regulation of their finances ; which do not offer place and distinction to the longest

purses; in which there is never any strife for honors or offices, nor any political combination and wire-pulling; but in which the members do honestly seek to help one another, to prefer one another in honor, to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfill the law of Christ. Such churches serve a purpose as illustrations or object lessons of Christianity which no other organizations can serve. They furnish a model after which the whole social order must be reconstructed. They show the world what society will be like when Christ comes to his own. If there were not too few churches of this kind, there would be no social question.

When we get hold of this conception of the kingdom of God as comprehending in its idea the entire social organism, and of the church as the central organ of the social organism, we see, at once, how erroneous is the statement sometimes made that the church is the greatest obstacle to the progress of the kingdom of heaven. I do not believe that there ever was a day when this was even approximately true. I believe that even in the Middle Ages the church was doing more than all other agencies put together to promote the kingdom of heaven. I believe that the church

is doing to-day the largest part of what is done to supply society with the vitalizing divine energies by which the kingdom of heaven is extended upon the earth.

What may be truthfully said is this: that there are local churches—a considerable number of them—whose administration is such that they hinder more than they help the progress of the kingdom. And it may also be said that there is a pretty strong tendency, in many churches, to forget the instrumental character of the church; to forget that it is a part and not the whole, a means and not the end; and to be content with building up the church, or the denomination, instead of studying to make the church serviceable in building up the kingdom. Just so far as this is true, the church does become an obstacle to the progress of the kingdom.

There are local churches which are, essentially, religious clubs. The principles on which they are organized, the methods of their administration are all assimilated to those of the social club. They admit only those whose opinions and tendencies are similar to their own; they take no pains to attract to their membership those who would not be congenial; they preserve before the commu-

nity a certain attitude of exclusiveness. So far as ideas and practices like these characterize the life of any church, it is, beyond a doubt, a pretty serious obstruction to the growth of the kingdom.

And it must be admitted that the tendency to hold the church apart from the world, to regard it as having its end in itself, is quite too strong in many quarters. All attempts to maintain a vital relation between the church and the community are regarded by many persons with great disfavor and suspicion. The minister who tries to bring the law of Christ to bear upon trade and industry and politics is very apt to be told that he is getting out of his sphere ; that his business is to preach the gospel and leave all these secular affairs alone. The minister who tries in all soberness and devoutness of spirit to apply Christianity to life, is very sure to be described by many pious folk as a "sensationalist." "The secularization of the pulpit"—this is the crime charged upon all those who attempt in any way to make the teaching of the church broadly influential in human affairs. Now, just so far as this sentiment prevails in our churches, they are, no doubt, obstacles in the way of the kingdom of God. A more perverse

or mischievous notion cannot well be entertained, than that which stigmatizes as profane the very service which the church is called to render. If the Spirit of God has any message for the church in this day, it is the call to go forth through the gates into the crowded thoroughfares and prepare the way of the people ; to cast up the highway and gather out the stones ; to lift up an ensign for the people. And they who reprove such service as this will do well to beware lest they expose themselves to a stern condemnation.

As a matter of fact, many of those social functions which pious people now describe as secular were once performed by the Christian church. Mr. Stead has put this very strongly in his chapter on "The Church, Catholic and Civic." The care of the poor, as he shows, was once the exclusive function of the church. The hospitals, also, were church institutions; to some extent they are so to-day, but many of them have passed under the care of the state. The orphans and all the unfortunate and defective classes were sheltered by the church ; now the state provides for them. "Education," says Mr. Stead, "is another great department which in early times used to be regarded as much the right and duty of the

church as the conducting of public worship is to-day." "The public library formerly had no existence except in monasteries." "In fact," he continues, "the more closely it is examined, the more clearly will the fact stand out that if any of the great saints, who, a thousand years ago, Christianized and civilized Europe, were to come to Chicago, they would, after surveying the whole scene, decide that three fourths, at least, of the work which they did was in the hands either of the city council, the mayor, or the county commissioners, and that not more than one fourth remained in the hands of the clergy and their so-called church. The state, or rather the city, has become the executor of the church for three fourths of the work which the church was instituted to accomplish. This is right enough, for it is the duty of the church ever to press forward, and when it has Christianized the community sufficiently to entrust any of its own duties to the elected representatives of the people, there is always more work to be done farther afield. *But the responsibility for the due discharge of all these functions of which it has relieved itself, remains with it intact yet.*

“But unfortunately, no sooner does the church rid itself of the onerous responsibility with which it was formerly saddled, than it seems to abandon all interest and care in what used to be its special work; and what was heretofore regarded as distinctly Christian work, is often handed over to men who have not the slightest trace of Christian principle. In this respect the church behaves not unlike the unfortunate mother of an illegitimate child, who, finding it irksome any longer to maintain her offspring, hands it over to a baby farmer, and thanks God she is well quit of her brat.”¹

Not only so, but when any attempt is made to call the attention of the people of the churches to their continuing responsibility for the care of those interests which were once wholly theirs, but which they have now entrusted to the civic authorities, you hear from a certain class of people loud protests against the treatment of such topics in the churches. “We don’t want politics,” they cry; “we don’t want sociology; give us spiritual sermons; preach the gospel.”

Such protests as these are very hard to en-

¹ “If Christ Came to Chicago,” pp. 280, 281.

dure patiently. It is no wonder that when they are loud and frequent, earnest men should be moved to say that the church is a great obstacle to the progress of God's kingdom. But I do not believe that this technical religionism represents the church of to-day. An institution must be judged by its tendencies, more than by its achievements. The main question is, "Which way is it going?" And it seems very clear to me that the church of this time is steadily and swiftly advancing toward a full recognition of its high calling as the servant of God in witnessing for and helping to realize his kingdom on the earth. Those belated saints who assert the old traditional conception of the church as an "Ark of Safety," and want to be left alone in it with their pious thoughts and heavenly reveries, are not the representatives of the church of this day. The truth is beginning to get pretty firm possession of the mind of the church that we are to seek first the kingdom of God; that it is to this that our superior loyalty is due; that the church is the servant of the kingdom; that the usefulness of the church is tested by the amount and value of its contribution to the kingdom; that no church has any right to exist unless it is pouring a steady stream of

vitalizing and transforming influences into the social and political life of the community. It has taken Christendom a long time to get hold of the idea that the kingdom of God is represented by a regenerated and sanctified society, rather than by a mere ecclesiasticism. The breadth and significance of the phrase which was so often on the Master's lips has been tardily apprehended.

From the acceptance of this idea several important results may be hoped for.

1. It ought to clear the path that leads to a practical unity of Christians. The strongest barriers between the disciples of Christ to-day are ecclesiastical rather than doctrinal. The questions which divide Christians relate more to the polity than to the faith of the church. If the truth can be grasped that the church in its best estate is only subordinate and instrumental,—that it is not the kingdom, but the servant of the kingdom,—then the schisms which now exist will appear to be as absurd and hateful as they are. What gives intensity and stubbornness to these sectarian strifes is the conviction, in the heart of every sectary, that his particular ecclesiasticism represents the church of Christ, and that the church is the one supremely sacred and im-

portant thing. If you can make him see that the church is not the supreme thing; that his church and all churches are only means to an end; that their value is to be ascertained not by any traditional or scriptural tests but by what they are now seen to be doing in building the kingdom of God in the world, it is clear that the nerve of sectarianism would be cut. And I do not believe that any other radical remedy for schism will ever be found but that which will naturally spring from a clear apprehension of the kingdom of God as superior to, and inclusive of, all ecclesiasticisms, and as the supreme object of Christian loyalty.

2. Another rational fruit of this new conception of Christian obligation will be an enlargement of the type of Christian manhood. The man whose supreme loyalty is due to the kingdom of God, will be a larger and purer specimen than any mere churchman that ever lived. The ideas among which such a man moves will be ampler, his sympathies broader, his aims more aspiring. To believe that the whole world is redeemed and is being saved; to realize that the reclamation of the whole of life for Christ is possible; to comprehend that the Master whom we serve is subduing unto

himself all these interests and powers of the world; that business and politics and education and art and social life are all to be brought under his sway, must awaken energies and inspire heroisms and develop characters such as we have not seen.

3. We shall see also, I think, among the results of this way of thinking, a revival of religion of a far more thorough-going type than any which has appeared in our day. There is a gospel of the kingdom, and there is also a law of the kingdom; and both of them must be preached with demonstration of the spirit and with power, before that kingdom can fully come.

The law of the kingdom requires us to love the Lord with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves. It expects us, in every relation of life, to look not on our own things but also on the things of others. It insists that the spirit of this commandment must rule in every transaction between man and man, on week days as well as Sundays, in the market as well as in the home. It absolutely reverses the current maxims and practices of exchange, and expects us, in all our bargains and dealings, instead of getting as much as we can, to give as much as we can. *As much as*

we can, I say, in justice to ourselves, and to those who are dependent on us. *As much as we can* without weakening or pauperizing those with whom we deal. A proper self-regard is not abolished; but the whole attitude of the mind is changed; and life, instead of being a discipline of greed, becomes an opportunity of ministry. The fact that so many professing Christians doubt the possibility of maintaining life upon this basis, shows how profound is the skepticism of the human heart. When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Verily he would find in the earth to-day a great multitude of those who bear his name, but who do not believe that the world could be governed by his law. This is the one blighting, paralyzing, damning infidelity. It is against this, first of all, that they who believe in the kingdom must lift up the standards of the King. His law must be preached as the law of all life — must be preached till it produces conviction of sin. A great many of the people in the pews need to be convicted; the real meaning of the Christian law has never been brought home to them. A thorough preaching of the law of Christ in its application to the shop and the mart and the mine

and the kitchen and the office and the senate and the forum, would be very disquieting, no doubt. Many would be pricked to the heart by such a presentation; not a few would stop their ears and say: "Away with this fellow who profanes the pulpit with secularities!" but some would listen; we might hope to hear them crying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

And then we should hear the blessed gospel of the kingdom. O my brethren, have we heard it? How many of us have it ready on our lips, waiting to leap into winged words? What a message it is, if one could only give it voice! O you that toil and strive, you that labor and are heavy laden, do you know what rest and peace there is for all who will take Christ's yoke upon them and learn of him? Do you know what a change would pass upon all this scene of tumult if good-will could take the place of greed, and we could all try, even for a little while, to love our neighbors as ourselves? You masters and workmen, who now stand arrayed against each other in hostile bands, each waiting to take advantage of the other's necessities, and to crowd each other to the wall,—have you ever heard the good news that you might be friends and helpers

one of another?—that employers might find their highest pleasure in turning their gains into helpful ministries to the welfare of their men? that employees might be as loyal to their employer as soldiers to a trusted leader or pupils to a beloved and honored teacher? that factory and workshop might thus become the very house of God and the gate of heaven? Have you ever heard that with such peace as this, plenty must surely come to the millions of happy workers? And what is needed that it may come? Nothing, nothing on earth nor in heaven but the hearty acceptance of the law of Christ by masters and men—by men as well as masters.

You multitudes that crowd the avenues of trade, elbowing one another, trampling one another, pressing against one another so eagerly and brutally that the ways are clogged and there is no passage, and you stifle and smother one another in your mad rush after profit,—have you not heard that this world of exchange might be a happy world, if each, instead of watching to snatch what his neighbor holds, were only willing to share with his neighbor; were only thoughtful, in every exchange, of his neighbor's interest as of his own? This world of trade is not meant to be

pandemonium; this is not Christ's way — not the way of the kingdom.

“ Rich, through my brethren's poverty?
Such wealth were hideous ; I am blest
Only in what they share with me,
In what I share with all the rest.”

That is the way of the kingdom. And that kingdom is coming!

And you who look on abashed and humiliated while the temple of our liberties is profaned by throngs of place-hunters; you whose hearts are heavy because partisan madness and selfish ambition have come to be the ruling motives in public life, and the great opportunities of public service are thought of mainly as the stepping-stones of personal aggrandizement — do you know, have you heard, that all this turbulent realm belongs to Christ; that he has redeemed it; that the coming of his kingdom means the purification of politics, the substitution of patriotism for partisanship, the exaltation of the common welfare above all schemes of private ambition? Do you not know that the day is coming when the citizens, because they are Christians, will have none but their wisest and best to serve them in the state; and that the wisest and

best, because they are Christians, will leave the desk or the bench or the pulpit when their fellow-citizens summon them to serve the state, as promptly as Cincinnatus left his plow in the field for the service of old Rome? Do you not know that the time is coming when the service of the state will be regarded as not less holy than service at the altar; when the same kind of consecration will be thought needful in a magistrate that we now expect in a missionary; nay, that the people, with the ballot in their hands, will be saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" as devoutly as when they take into their hands the bread and the cup of the holy sacrament? If Christ's kingdom in the world means anything, it means this; and the gospel of the kingdom is simply the good news that this time is coming,—coming with every revolving day, with every overturning of the hosts of organized selfishness.

Now it is the firm hold of these great realities of the kingdom, present to faith though far from sight, and the dauntless preaching of them, with conviction and fervor, that is going to bring revivals of religion of a different sort from those which have been common here,—revivals like those by which John the

Baptist prepared the way of the kingdom, and Savonarola, four hundred years ago, revolutionized Florence. The fruits of these revivals will be found not merely or mainly in lengthening church-rolls and more people at the prayer-meeting, but in the goodwill that takes the place of strife in mill and factory; in the heroic and consecrated service of humanity that supplants our lazy and aimless almsgiving; and in the new ideals of public life that will banish the boss and the corruptionist from politics, and make the city hall the citadel of righteousness.

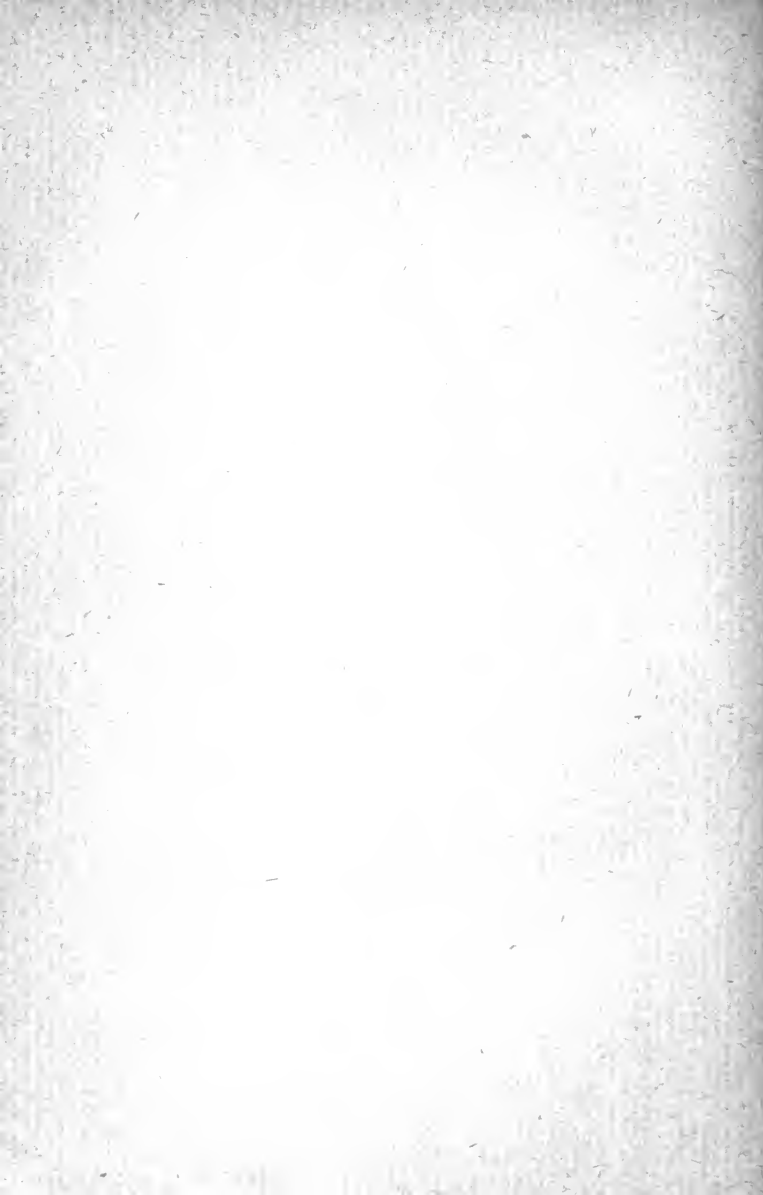
Revivals of religion like these are what the weary world is waiting for. Not until religion is manifested as the power that is able thus to subdue the kingdom of this world, will it command the respectful attention of men. And when you have made it mean all this — nay, when you have even made it manifest that this is what you mean by it, and are bound to make it stand for, the question about reaching the masses will drop out of your programs; the masses will come as clouds and as doves to your windows.

Christian men, this is no mere vision; it is what Christianity means; what it has meant ever since John the Baptist, in the wilderness

of Judea, proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The kingdom is here, even now, in many beautiful beginnings; in homes which its love has sanctified; in neighborhoods where its peace is revealed in blessed deeds of kindness; in many a sign in the realm of industry of growing good-will and "toil co-operant to an end;" and in groups of men and women here and there who are rising to wrest from hands profane the scepter of the civic power.

It is thus that the kingdom cometh, without observation, indeed, but not without transforming might; it is thus that the New Jerusalem, with homes of comfort, and palaces of beauty, and temples of praise is silently coming down from heaven. O beloved, believe in it; look for it; build its foundations; lift up its standards; tell out its messages, till the day shall come for which the whole creation waits, and He whose right it is shall reign over all the earth.

THE LAW OF THE KINGDOM.



THE LAW OF THE KINGDOM.

WHAT is the Christian rule of life? It would seem that there should be no need in the last decade of the nineteenth century of asking this question. Surely the foundation principles on which Christian character rests ought by this time to be cleared and established. The Fathers, the Doctors, the Reformers, the Missionaries, the Evangelists must, before now, have worked out some simple statement over which there can be no controversy.

In truth, however, there is no little confusion in the minds of men respecting the essential elements of Christian conduct. Not long ago, in a company of educated men in my own city, the proposition was distinctly maintained that the basis of the Christian morality is self-love. A clear-headed lawyer, who was brought up under Christian influences, assumed that Christianity makes its appeal to self-interest. When that interpretation was challenged, he simply said, "I spoke of Christianity as I have always heard it presented from the pulpit."

A prominent socialist recently requested me to assist him in arranging for a course of lectures, in which he proposed to prove that the Christian morality is radically defective in this very particular—because it makes self-love the central principle. Both Protestants and Catholics, says this socialist, teach this doctrine. “As to the former,” he specifies, “I need only refer to Bunyan’s hero, Christian, who has been a model to all evangelists, and who yet leaves his wife and family behind in the city of Destruction. As to the latter, think simply of Cardinal Newman’s ‘Myself and God’ as the only beings he was concerned about,—ay, reflect simply on the first question and answer of the Roman Catholic Catechism,—‘Why did God make you?’—‘To know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him in the next,’—which answer I pronounce wicked, immoral teaching, for the simple reason that it is a half-truth.”

That the popular representations of Christianity have given cause for such strictures may be admitted. Any of us who can remember the preaching of forty years ago can testify that the motive of self-interest was then pressed in a way to dwarf all other motives.

The rewards to be won, the penalties to be averted ; the possible gain, the threatened losses; the impending perils, the proffered safety,—these were the considerations kept constantly before our thought. One hymn which was always sung at the prayer-meeting that I attended in my boyhood, contained the following definition of life :—

“ Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to ensure the great reward ;
And while the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.

“ Life is the hour that God has given,
To escape from hell and fly to heaven;
The day of grace, and mortals may
Secure the blessings of the day.”

I do not deny that other motives than these were appealed to; but I affirm that in the preaching of forty years ago these motives were so emphasized as to give the precise impression which my friend the lawyer and my friend the socialist had gained,—that the main business of a Christian is to look out for his own interests; that religion is, first and foremost, a scheme for securing our own highest welfare.

That such was the prevailing conception of what is central in the Christian system is evident when we consider the assumptions of the social philosophy then current. The men who were discussing social questions in the early part of this century were Christian believers; and it is certain that they would not have assumed, in their discussions, a rule of life which was in direct conflict with the Christian rule of life as they understood it; yet they do constantly assume that self-interest is the supreme principle of life; all their social philosophy rests upon an unflinching individualism. Malthus, who was a Christian minister, went so far as to say that "the great Author of nature, with that wisdom which is apparent in all his works, has made the passion of self-love beyond comparison stronger than the passion of benevolence." If this was the pattern upon which man was made, then, of course, Christianity, which only seeks to restore and fulfill the human nature, must bring man, in his ultimate perfection, to a state of being in which his self-love shall be beyond comparison stronger than his benevolence. To one who believes this, the constant appeal to self-love is legitimate; and, conversely, one who hears from the pulpit

the self-regarding motives emphasized, to the neglect of other motives, would naturally conclude that the central principle of Christian conduct must be a keen regard for our own interests, and that the true social law must be an unflinching individualism. It must be admitted that the Christian rule of life, *as it has been popularly represented during recent generations*, does recognize self-interest as the ruling motive.

Against this interpretation a strong reaction has now set in. "The Christian morality," said an eminent teacher to me the other day, "is pure altruism." This is the view which now everywhere tends to prevail. The motives which were so diligently plied forty years ago are now repudiated; the hymns, as President Fairchild has shown, which put their appeal into lyrical form, have largely dropped out of our hymn-books; the conception seems to have taken firm hold of the popular mind that it is not the main business of a Christian to look out for his own interests, whether of this world or of the next. The law of life, according to all the popular literature, is self-denial, self-consecration. The self-regarding motives have no place in the life of a Christian, as that life is now commonly conceived.

Of this high and heroic sentiment, the recent books of Dr. Herron furnish a strong expression, and Dr. Lyman Abbott, who has said so many noble things with such convincing power, puts it thus vigorously:—

“When Christ is asked, Which is the great command of the law, and replies, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and thy neighbor as thyself,’ he does not in his answer give his ideal of life. He simply repeats the Jewish ideal, as it is expressed in two general laws found in the Jewish books. *To love one’s neighbor as one’s self is not the Christian law of love; it is the Jewish law of justice.* Who am I that I should expect better treatment or higher regard from my neighbor than I accord to him? Christ’s ideal is quite different. He gives it to his own disciples, in his last interview with them before his death. ‘A new commandment give I unto you,’ he says, ‘that ye love one another as I have loved you.’ Did he love his disciples only as he loved himself? He that beggared himself that he might make us rich, he that emptied himself of divinity that he might make us divine, he that lived and loved and suffered and died for those that were unworthy of his sacrifice, loved us far

more than he loved himself. This ideal of love he left as a legacy for his followers; and it is not an impossible one for us. Paul loved the Gentile world better than himself, and every true missionary has done so. William of Orange loved his country better than himself, and every true patriot has done so. William Lloyd Garrison loved the enslaved better than he loved himself, and every true reformer has done so. The true mother loves her child better than herself; the nurse her patient; the martyr his church. It is not the Ten Commandments which should be put up in our churches as the ideals of our moral life for us to pattern after. They are but the primitive prohibitions of the grosser sins against social order. In their place should be put the New Commandment, 'That ye love one another as I have loved you.'"¹

A pure altruism, in which no trace of self-regard is found — this, according to the current popular teaching, is the distinctive principle of Christian morality. Dr. Herron has expressed the same idea in words almost identical with these of Dr. Abbott.

Doubtless this reaction against that old individualism came none too soon; most of us

¹ "The Evolution of Christianity," pp. 55, 56.

have been quite in sympathy with the reaction, and have done what we could to help it on; still it may be worth while to ask whether there is not danger that, like most reactions, it will go too far; whether it may not ignore or deny some of the essential elements of Christian morality. Against the theory of Malthus—that the Creator has made self-love in the human soul immeasurably stronger than benevolence—we may well revolt; that theory and the social philosophy which springs from it, have smitten the earth with a curse. But is it safe for us to say, on the other hand, that Christianity is pure altruism? Is this the true interpretation of the words and of the life of Christ? Perhaps it is. I do not feel like dogmatizing about it; and I gladly confess that with the spirit and the purpose of those who preach the doctrine, I am in the deepest sympathy. But simply with a view to fuller discussion, I am moved to raise this question. For this theory, like that other, will have wide-reaching consequences; the social philosophy that springs from it will affect—is, perhaps, already affecting—the common welfare; our fundamental ethical ideas are always matters of supreme importance.

Recalling those glowing words which I have just quoted, we shall at once admit that the decalogue does not furnish the Christian rule of life. One of the ten commandments was, as it seems to me, distinctly repealed by our Lord; and others were so modified by his interpretation that they cannot, as they stand, be considered as binding upon us.

Chiefly, however, because of the negative form in which they are stated, are they defective from a Christian point of view. Christianity is not a religion of prohibitions. Its genius is positive, affirmative, constructive; not negative, critical, restrictive. It is not a fence, it is a field. I do not mean that it imposes no restraints; I mean that it relies far less upon these than upon promises, helps, incitements. It gives us a law, no doubt, and we are trying now to find out what that law is; but primarily it is a gospel, and the very fact that it is a gospel indicates that its law will be phrased somewhat differently from the law of the older dispensation. The Ten Commandments must always be of the utmost value to men as waymarks in the progress of morality, and as the statement of what we may call the moral minimum; but they have

no place on the walls of any Christian church as its standard of conduct.

But that other twofold commandment quoted by our Lord from the Jewish Scriptures — what shall we say of that? I have always regarded it as the complete and comprehensive expression of the Christian rule of life. Let us hear the words in which it is conveyed: —

“And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him. Master which is the great commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.”

I have always understood this as Christ's restatement of the law of life, the law of the soul, the law of God; not as his summary of the Jewish morality. Can it be a mere *argumentum ad hominem*? Is it not rather the sublime generalization of all human obligation? So far as the “great and first commandment” is concerned, there can be no question about this. These words are found

in the Jewish Scriptures, but they are broad enough for the race. No other statement of our relations to God has ever needed to be made. The most devout worshiper under the gospel light has never thought of any duty to God that these words do not cover. When Jesus quotes these words from the Jewish Scriptures, and calls them "the great and first commandment," he does not merely say to the Jews, "This is your way of thinking about your duty to God." He must assume that this is the complete and perfect statement of human obligation to God. And when he immediately says that there is a second commandment *like unto it*, he certainly conveys the idea that the second commandment is as comprehensive, as perfect, as universal as the first. I am unable to see how it is possible to make any distinction, in our Lord's use of them, between the Godward rule, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart," and the manward rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If the latter had been a mere Hebrew maxim, and the former a rule of universal obligation, he would not, it seems to me, have spoken of them as equal or alike. He must have pointed out the difference between them.

“On these two commandments,” he continues, “hangeth all the law *and the prophets*.” It is not merely the Jewish legalism which is condensed, or rather transfigured, in them; it is the whole ethical, evangelical message of God to men by the mouth of his prophets. I do not think that the substance of the prophetic testimony can be regarded as merely a Jewish ideal. And the whole of our Lord’s teaching in this passage seems to me to signify that he is not merely quoting an ethnic maxim of the Jews for their condemnation, but that he is putting into words the universal rule of life—what James called “The Royal Law,” the law of laws, the statement of the Whole Duty of Man to himself, to his neighbor, to his God.

As I have said already, there is no dispute about the first of these commandments. It is the second which is alleged to be defective. For this, we are told, Christ substituted the new commandment, “that ye love one another as I have loved you.” Surely no one wishes to deny or evade the binding force of this new commandment. The only question is whether it contradicts or supplants what Jesus calls the second great commandment of the law; whether, indeed, it adds anything to

that commandment. If we loved our neighbors as ourselves, should we not love one another as He loved us ?

“No,” say our friends, “we should not. Jesus loved his disciples more than he loved himself. The patriot loves his country more than he loves himself ; the reformer loves the oppressed more than he loves himself ; the mother loves her child more than she loves herself. Loving others as we love ourselves is not the Christian law; it was not Christ's way, nor is it the way of those who have received his spirit ; the Christian way is to love others more than we love ourselves.” Sometimes the statement seems to imply that we are to love others, and not ourselves at all. We have here, it is evident, a pretty serious difficulty. The importance of settling it rightly cannot be overstated.

Is it true, then, that Christ loved us far more than he loved himself ? In what sense is it true ?

The perfect self-consecration of our Lord is indeed a truth which none of his disciples would deny or understate. He kept back nothing that he could bestow, he gave himself freely for us all. The world has never seen such complete self-denial. Naturally, by

contrast, this aspect of his life makes upon the world the strongest impression.

But we must not forget that as there never was such self-denial as that which he displayed, so there was never such self-assertion. Listen to Dr. Bushnell's familiar words:—

“Imagine a human creature saying to the world, ‘I came forth from the Father;’ ‘Ye are from beneath, I am from above;’ facing all the intelligence and even the philosophy of the world, and saying, in bold assurance, ‘Behold, a greater than Solomon is here;’ ‘I am the light of the world,’ ‘the way, the truth, and the life;’ publishing to all peoples and religions, ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by me;’ promising openly in his death, ‘I will draw all men unto me;’ addressing the Infinite Majesty and testifying, ‘I have glorified thee on the earth;’ calling to the human race, ‘Come unto me,’ ‘Follow me;’ laying his hand on all the dearest and most intimate affections of life and demanding a precedent love,—‘He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.’”

Verily this is an amazing demand. This meek and lowly One gives much, but does he not ask much also? Who of mortals has ever ventured to lay such tribute upon the

affection and allegiance of men? Never does he falter in this assertion of his own transcendent claims; he is never anything less than King of men; before Pilate, on the last day of his life, that great affirmation is calmly made. We do not always, I fear, grasp these august elements in the characters of this Master. "The fact should not be overlooked," says Dr. Newman Smyth, "that in the crises of Jesus' ministry we do not observe a single waiver by the Master of any just right. He met the Pharisees with unflinching assertion of his spiritual authority. Neither in the palace of the high priest, nor before Pilate's judgment throne, did Jesus relinquish any of his legal rights. And that scene in the temple when the money changers were driven out belongs to the oldest narratives of Jesus' life, and was not omitted from the gospel of John. The hand that permitted itself to be nailed to the cross, was the hand that had held the whip of cords and overthrown the tables of the money-changers in the temple. In the truest moral reality, Jesus' whole life was an assertion of human rights, a constant and courageous warfare for the just supremacy of love."¹

¹ "Christian Ethics," p. 381.

We sometimes say that the death of Jesus was due to his self-denial; might we not with equal truth declare that he died because he would not deny himself? Suppose that before Pilate he had lowered his claim; is it not evident that the case against him would have been dismissed? Why did he not say: "I care not what you call me; I have no rights nor dignities to maintain; I have emptied myself, and am ready to surrender everything; if you do not wish me to call myself King of men, I will surrender that title"? He did not say it because it was not true. He would not deny his Kingship, because he was here to affirm and maintain it.

In the view of these facts must all those strong texts be interpreted which speak of his beggaring himself that we might be rich, and emptying himself of divinity that we might be divine. The doctrine of the "Kenosis" must be reconciled, in some way, with these facts of his life. And does not the whole history justify us in saying that while no self-abnegation was ever so complete as his, on the other hand, no self-regard was ever so sublime as his? So far as Jesus himself is concerned, I do not clearly see that there is any contradic-

tion between his life and his law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

It is difficult, however, for us to explore the consciousness of one whose life appears to be on a plane above our own. What the law of life is for ourselves, we ought to be able to determine.

That the substance of it is love, we shall all confess. God is love; and the Christian rule of life which brings man into harmony with God must be the law of love. But what do we mean by love? In that profound and masterly treatise upon Christian Ethics which Dr. Newman Smyth has given us, I find a statement which seems to me most fully to set forth the answer to this question. I shall venture to quote at some length:—

“Love contains in its unity a trinity of virtue. It comprehends within itself the three following distinctions: Moral self-affirmation, self-impartation, and self-existence in others. Love affirms its own worthiness, imparts to others its good, and finds its life again in the well-being of others. . . .

“A certain respect for self and declaration of the worth of self, enters as a primal element into all true love. The giver must have

respect for his gift, or giving would lose all character. In every good gift there is implied a sense of the worthiness or fitness of the gift. To love worthily is at the same time to be worthy of love. He is not a true lover who in his love does not keep his honor, who is not himself made pure by virtue of his love. . . . We cannot conceive of a true human love as existing and continuing without this affirmation of its own worthiness as a gift of self to another; still less are we able to conceive of an infinite love without the indwelling energy of an eternal self-affirmation. . . .

“Love is self-impartation. It is of the nature of love to give, and to give of self. . . . Love does not fill up its measure of devotion until the lover has given not merely all that he has, but all that he is.”

There is, nevertheless, a limit to this self-impartation.

“Love wills to impart itself up to the limit of its own worth of being, but no further. Love cannot so impart itself as at the same time to destroy itself. Love in self-bestowal cannot become suicidal. If the impulse of giving inherent in any human love should go beyond the limit of respect to its own being and worth, the affection would at once lower

itself into lawless passion; love would so overreach itself as to cease to be good. For example, nothing is more self-sacrificial than a mother's love. Yet a mother who should so love her child as to let the purity and holy sweetness of her affection be lost in some endeavor to serve or to secure the happiness of the child, would thereby forfeit the very truth and power of her love. The ethical limit of self-impartment is always to be found in the ethical necessity of self-affirmation; the benevolence of love has its moral bounds in the holiness of love. . . .

"The third element in the trinity of love is self-finding in another, the living in another's life. . . . This third element of the trinity of love may be said to proceed from the other two; for the love which affirms itself and the love which imparts itself receive their completion in the love which finds itself in another, and brings that other into its own life. So every pure affection is at once a losing and a finding of self in the friendship which is cherished or the home which is blessed."¹

These weighty words bring before us the real nature of that Christian love which is the fulfilling of the law of life. They may help us

¹ "Christian Ethics," pp. 226-232.

to see that when we speak of the lover as begging himself or emptying himself for the sake of the beloved, we are using the language of feeling rather than the language of philosophy. In a deeper sense it is true that only he who loves himself highly and nobly can love another worthily. No man's love is worth much to anybody unless he has a strong and sacred sense of the value of character. He must know and feel that honor, truth, probity, purity, magnanimity are worth more than success, prosperity, comfort,—more than life itself. He cannot know the value of these things unless they are elements of his own character. And if they are in his own character, he must respect himself; he cannot deny himself. They are divine elements, he knows; gifts of God to him; tokens of the glorious fact that he is even now one of the sons of God. Precious in God's sight he is; shall he not be honorable in his own sight?

To love his neighbor as himself—that he can clearly see to be his obligation; for his neighbor, like himself, is a son of God, and heir of all these divine perfections. He will deny himself ease, comfort, pleasure, yea, life itself, if need be, that his neighbor may enter into his inheritance. He would do that rather

than lose his own spiritual integrity, and he will love his neighbor as himself. But he will not love his neighbor more than himself, for that he has no right to do. His own spiritual integrity is as precious as his brother's; he has no more right to undervalue or to sacrifice his own than his brother's manhood. Both are equally precious in God's sight. It is because he has come to feel the value in himself of these great things of character that he desires them for his brother; but it is not by despising his own birthright and flinging it away that he will teach his brother to value his.

Such, it seems to me, was the love of the Master for his disciples. He loved them—their manhood, their spiritual integrity—so much that he was willing to deny himself the blessedness of the Father's house, and to suffer many things, even to give his life, that they might enter into the rights of the sons of God; but he did not love their spiritual integrity more than he loved his own; if he had, he would have had nothing to give them.

When we come to consider the case of the patriot and the reformer, it seems indeed that one man has often been willing to give his life that a nation might live, or that a multitude might be delivered from bondage. But more

careful thought will convince us that when these sacrifices were most worthily made, it was just because the hero understood the value of his own manhood that he gave his life. The patriotic or the philanthropic sacrifice is worth but little unless it makes for a larger virtue and a nobler manhood among the people. No man gives his life for that unless he feels and knows that virtue and manhood are worth more than life. If in his heart of hearts he believes this, then the time may come when he can only save his manhood by giving up his life. On the lower plane this is called self-denial; but on the higher plane it is the most sublime self-affirmation. Every such sacrifice is the tribute which a man pays to the worth of his own manhood.

It must be possible for us all to see that when we penetrate the surface of life and get at the heart of things, at the interests and motives that are really spiritual, this law of Christ abundantly vindicates itself. When I consider who my neighbor in reality is, and who I in reality am, I know that there is nothing higher that I can be asked to do for him than to love him as I love myself. When I make the interests of character both in him and in myself supreme and central, the whole matter

clears itself up at once. The confusion arises from fixing the thought upon the accidents of life rather than upon its essential elements; upon gains and losses, pains and pleasures, more than upon virtue and character. When only these accidents are in sight, Christian love may constrain me to say: "Let me suffer rather than that my brother should suffer." But when the deepest interests of the soul are under consideration, I cannot prefer his welfare to my own. I can do no more than to make it equal to my own. Shall I say, "Let me, rather than my brother, become a liar or a thief or a coward?" Shall I volunteer to lower my own integrity in any of these respects that I may raise his? Would not any such proposition as this be the quintessence of absurdity?

In the spiritual realm, among the great varieties of character, pure altruism is, therefore, impossible. To value another man's manhood so much more than my own as to sacrifice my honor and truth and purity for the sake of promoting these virtues in another, would be a species of moral insanity. All the commerce of men as spiritual and moral beings must conform to the law which bids us love our neighbors as ourselves.

One aspect of this case which has already been referred to may well be considered more fully. The essence of love, on the altruistic side, is giving. And the supreme gift is the gift of ourselves.

“Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare.”

The impartation of our own spiritual qualities and energies,—our faith, our courage, our patience, our calmness, our hope, our love, our wisdom,—this is the great ministry that love calls for. The mere act of depriving ourselves of enjoyment or of taking upon ourselves suffering in behalf of others has no value in it, unless we can in some way convey to them the life that is in us. Christ gave himself *for* us that he might give himself *to* us; and it is by this last giving that he crowns our lives. It is not of his want but of his fullness that we have received, grace upon grace. And it is well to remember that this kind of giving of necessity enriches the giver. It is not possible that any one should beggar himself by giving love and hope and courage to his fellows; he beggars himself by withholding. The more he gives the more he has. The reason why God is rich in mercy is that

his mercies are so plenteous and abundant. It is quite impossible, then, that one should really impoverish himself through love. The more he imparts to his fellows, the more abundant is his life, and the *more perfect his consciousness of abundant life*. His relation to them is precisely that of the members to the body. What happens to the hand or the heart or the brain when they work for the welfare of the other members? Is it possible for them to promote the well-being of all the rest without sharing in their well-being? Could any member of the body serve the rest by depriving itself of vigor? Is the body profited by a shrunken hand or an enfeebled heart?

It is evident, then, that this antithesis between our own well-being and that of our fellow-men does not exist in the spiritual realm. The natural laws of the spirit are such that the moment love begins to exercise itself, it blesteth him that gives and him that takes with an equal blessing. To identify ourselves with our neighbors is the vital law of the social organism, and we cannot dispossess ourselves in enriching them.

Let us test these principles in one or two familiar cases. Take the family. What is

the nature of the love by which parents and children should be united? We have known of parental despotisms in which the children were kept not merely in subjection, but even in vassalage; in which the parents recognized no rights on the part of the children, but exacted from them submission and service. It is evident that this is not in accordance with the Christian law. The despotic parent loves himself more than he loves his children, for he insists upon his own rights and does not recognize theirs. His egoism exceeds his altruism.

On the other hand, there are many parents in these days whose altruism is carried to a dangerous excess. They love their children so much more than they love themselves that they humiliate and degrade themselves—weakening their authority, destroying their influence, and thus depriving themselves of all power to do any really good thing for their children.

There are parents who have come to be scarcely more than the menial servants of their children, relieving them of care and labor; stinting themselves that their children may have abundance; yielding more and more to their children's exactions, and suffer-

ing from their children such disrespect and contempt as they would endure from no one else. This is the natural consequence of an excessive parental altruism. It develops in the children the most shocking type of egoism. Parental love must affirm its own dignity and honor; it must not prostrate itself in the place where it ought to reign. The rights of parenthood cannot be sacrificed in the interest of childhood. What good thing have parents left to give their children when they have debased their own manhood and womanhood in such a servile ministry? "The greatest reverence is due to a child," it is true; but there is an older oracle which bids us honor our fathers and mothers. That is a duty which the fathers and mothers must not forget to enforce. They will not receive honor from their children unless they maintain their own honor. The children will grow up destitute of reverence for God and man unless they learn in the household the lesson of reverence for their parents. "If I be a father, where is mine honor?" is a demand that no father must fail to make for his children's sake as well as for his own.

Parents have no right, then, to love their children more than they love themselves.

They may well care more for their children's characters than for their own comfort ; but that will only be because they care more for their own characters than for comfort. For the same reason, they will set their children's character above their children's comfort, and will choose for them the discipline, in the family and out of it, which brings character even at the expense of comfort. This will require the children to give honor to whom honor is due ; to have consideration for other people's rights as well as for their own ; to show themselves worthy of the love and care which they receive from others ; themselves to obey the royal law, and to love their fathers and mothers, and their neighbors, not of the household, as they love themselves.

In the family, therefore, the one thing precious in the eyes of all must be the character, the spiritual integrity of every member of the family. Each must value his own character so highly that he is willing to suffer the loss of all things rather than lose it ; each must value the character of every other as highly as he values his own, and be willing to make the same sacrifice for it. The highest interests of all are equally precious in the sight of all ; to love the others as he loves himself must be the

law of every one, and there can be no higher law.

If the royal law suffices for the family, it is not likely that we shall find any other sphere in which a larger proportion of altruistic motive will be called for. But let us try the law in one other realm. Charity, we might be inclined to say, must be pure altruism; when we are engaged in its blessed ministrations, no affirmations of self-love are admissible. On the contrary, I believe that, for the lack of these very affirmations, our attempted charities, in the great majority of cases, do more harm than good. The fact is that we have now on our hands a very large number of people — a class which is constantly increasing — who consider themselves entitled to receive charity, and who assume that it is the Christian duty of the rest of the community to bestow charity upon them. They are perfectly willing to sit in idleness while others work and save to supply them with the necessaries of life. They have an idea that this is what Christianity means — that other people should keep them from suffering, no matter how lazy or how wasteful they may be. There are people with whom I come in contact, who evidently propose to eat their bread in the sweat

of my brow ; who expect me to work that they may rest and to save that they may spend. If I hesitate, they are ready to cry out, "Where is your Christianity?" Now it is evident that if this kind of sentiment has gained currency among the receivers of charity, it must be largely the fault of the bestowers of charity. If the giving had not been done in wrong ways, such degradation would not have been suffered in the receiving.

It is because giving has been assumed to be a meritorious act,—no matter what the effect may be upon the life of him who receives the gift,—because the giving has been unmeasured, indiscriminating, characterless, that multitudes have been pauperized by it.

The one remedy for the evils that are propagated by reckless almsgiving is rigid adherence to the law which bids us love our neighbors as ourselves. Let me cultivate, first, a strong self-regard ; let me gain some clear understanding of what my manhood is worth to me ; then let me remember that the manhood of the man who asks for alms is worth just as much as mine, and let me love him as I love myself. Now I will make any sacrifice for him of my own possessions, or my own comfort, that will relieve his want, and will not

injure his manhood. But I will give him nothing which will encourage him to live in idleness and dependence ; I will not help him on in the downward road to abject mendicancy. I would choose for myself to suffer and to die rather than travel in that road, and because I love him as I love myself, I must choose the same thing for him. Never until this becomes the law of our beneficence, will our miscalled charities cease to be a curse rather than a blessing to the poor.

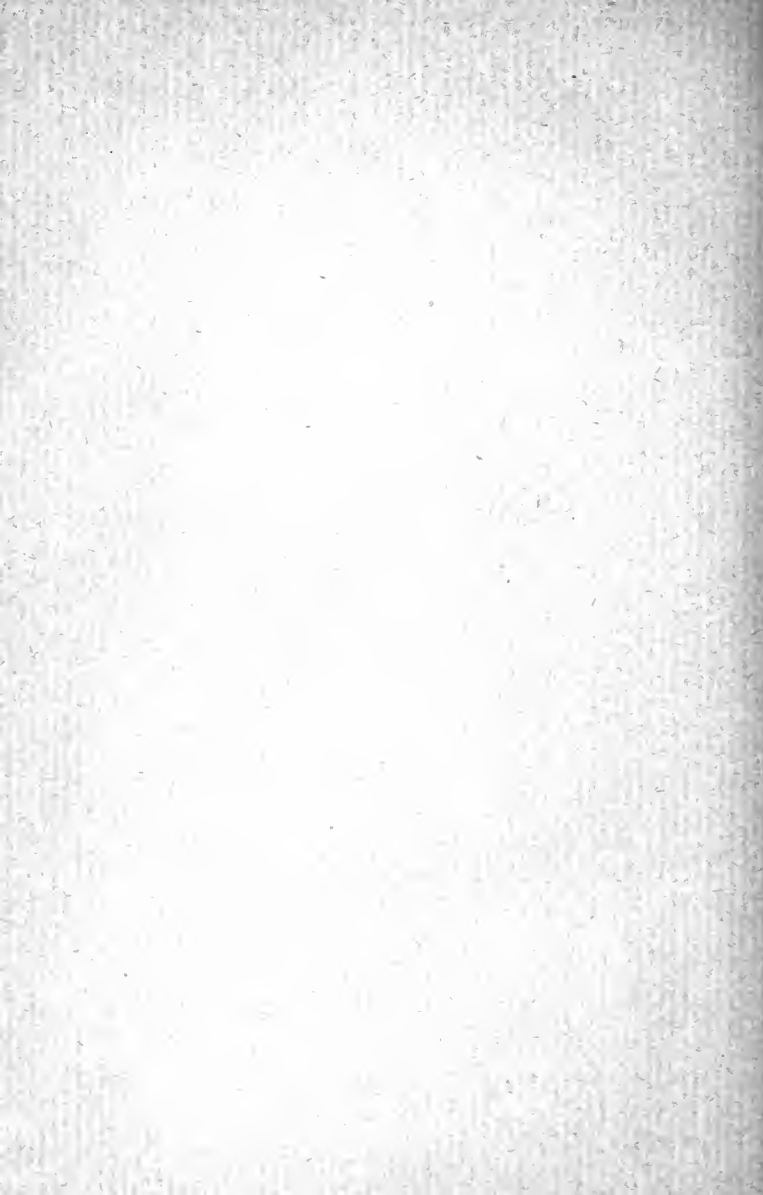
The tests which we have applied to this royal law pretty clearly indicate that it is not an obsolete Jewish maxim ; that our Lord was not merely quoting it to silence Jewish cavilers ; that he was solemnly reaffirming it as the law of human life. I believe, for my own part, that it is philosophically exact and complete ; that it states, in language which can never be improved or antiquated, the right relation between human beings, and the basis upon which human society must rest. No more perfect life, no more noble life, no more useful life is possible to any of us, than the life of him who in his heart accepts this royal law and faithfully obeys it.

We preachers sometimes speak of our calling as the preaching of the gospel ; and that is a

great part, the best part, of our work ; but it is not all of it. Christianity is a law as well as a gospel ; it brings us not only a remedy for sin but a rule of life. And one clear message of the *gospel* is that there is not only escape from the consequences of sin, but promise of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The meaning of this promise is only just beginning to be understood. Men are dimly catching at the idea that the Holy City of the New Jerusalem is not to be builded far away beyond the stars ; that it is coming down out of heaven from God—coming down to earth ; that Christ came to bring heaven to earth ; that the kingdom of heaven is here upon the earth. We are citizens of that kingdom, and our first business is to understand its law. By that law all life is to be ruled—to that law all the institutions and relations of men must conform.

We have been trying to build society on other foundations, and the structure is tottering to its fall. It is useless to hide from ourselves the truth. Great social overturnings are even now in progress. Some very important reconstructions of the social order are inevitable and imminent. What shall the new

order be? On what foundation shall it rest? For myself, I have no doubt that the law of Christ is the only law that will give to society both vigor and unity. The old individualism was a half truth ; the new socialism which men are trying to substitute for it is the other half. The new fragment will not give us any better results than the old one has given us. Its losses will balance its gains. We shall never have order and peace till we are able to unite these fragments—out of the twain making one. What God hath joined together man does not well to put asunder.



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